WESTERN OTJIMPOLO VELD

[8 cont.] HENCE THE RULE IS THAT THE WEDDING AND THE GIRLS
585 initiation coincide, and usually the girl moves to the village of
881 her first husband immediately after the completion of the festivi-
[591] ties.

584 When a man is courting, he must first attempt to obtain the consent of the girl. Once he has succeeded, he goes to the girl's parents. If they also give their consent, the engagement is settled. At this point, all communication is interrupted until the bridegroom appears and says to the girl's parents: "I want to have the wedding now." If the parents agree, they go to their relatives to spread the happy news. If the relatives object, they can still prevent the marriage. If they do not, the date of the wedding feast is fixed. In the bush, the bridegroom must bring the bride's parents a piece of big game. Usually people make matters
439 simpler for themselves. Either they have already earned a head
584 of cattle from a black farmer, and this stands ready in the farmer's
648 herd to be fetched for the wedding feast, or -- and this is more
452 common -- the Bushman will begin a begging tour around the black farmyards until someone gives him a cow as an advance on hides to be supplied later or on work to be performed.

452 And miraculously, this always succeeds. It is to be ex-
648 plained on various grounds. A black farmer, whose worst character traits include avarice and greed, would never give another Black who possesses nothing one of his dearly beloved cows on the strength of uncertain promises. And not unjustly. The next day the cow would have disappeared into the stomachs of the borrower and his friends, and on the day after that the borrower would have disappeared beyond the tribal boundaries. Repeatedly the Bushmen came to my camp too late. But from the Ukuanjama I always received the assurance: "The Bushmen will keep their word; they will certainly come if they are alive." In addition to this, of course, there is the symbiosis. Each village has its
[437] Bushmen. During the period of the harvest they suddenly appear
/9/ and help with it. Between times they never miss a celebration, and at one time or another this one comes with hides and another with honey. And finally the chiefs of the Bushmen kin
[622] groups see to it that nothing happens to injure the reputation of
[674] the Bushmen. It is unheard of for these people to commit theft.

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

for stretching carrying nets, and for pounding things. Informants said they had never seen or heard of stone arrow points or blades. They still use bone and wood points occasionally but have for the most part changed over to metal for knives, axes, assegai blades, and drills, as well as for arrow points.

From wood the men make bows and quivers as well as sticks for making fire, digging, carrying, and stirring; handles for knives, axes, and assegais; bowls, spoons, mortars, and pestles; and musical instruments—the five-stringed *//guashi* and a one-stringed violin. Reed and bone are available in plenty for arrow shafts. There are abundant fiber and sinew for the excellent cordage that men and women make. Little tortoise shells are dippers and cosmetic boxes. Hides, although not abundant, are sufficient—in the Nyae Nyae region at least—for everyone to have a kaross, for the men to have breechclouts, and for the women to have modesty aprons and skins to wear around the buttocks. All have sewn skin bags. These objects of hide are made by men because they are products of the hunt. Frequently there are surplus hides for trade.

Ostrich egg shells are used for water containers, and women make ostrich egg shell beads. This is the one important craft of the women and the one for which Bushmen are noted among the surrounding peoples. Good ostrich egg shell bead ornaments are the most prized possessions of the !Kung. The women also make ornaments of European beads and of grass and thongs and *tsi* nuts. They very much enjoy ornamenting themselves.

The !Kung decorate their artifacts occasionally with rather meager scratched designs but have not developed graphic, pictorial, or sculptural arts to any appreciable extent.

The !Kung trade with their Tswana and Herero neighbors, offering well-tanned hides, ostrich egg shell beads, and a red powder they make from the dead heartwood of a certain tree. Usually what they want most of all in exchange is tobacco—for they are passionately addicted smokers—and malleable metal from which they shape their arrow points and assegai blades. They also want knives, axes, European beads, and either the round-bottomed Ovambo pots or European iron pots. Once in a while they get an old chisel or file, a basin or cup, or a few miserable scraps of cloth garments. The little Bushmen find the bigger, more aggressive Bantu hard barguiners and are rather at their mercy.

The significant thing about !Kung artifacts from a social point of view is that they are not accumulated as wealth and their possession does not symbolize high status or bestow prestige. It is not advantageous to multiply and accumulate in this society. Any man can make what he needs when he wants to. Most of the materials he uses are abundant and free for anyone to take. Furthermore, in their nomadic lives, without beasts of burden, the fact that the people themselves must carry everything puts a sharp limit

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

177 439 they are no longer self-sufficient. Contact with other peoples has made them familiar with various articles, especially iron and tobacco, which they now covet very greatly and in order to obtain which they carry on an extensive system of barter. Even within the band itself [437] there is a good deal of barter in such things as meat, clothing, veldkos, and utensils. Berries and roots, for example, are exchanged for tobacco or beads, skin bags for poisoned arrows, and so on. Trading [484] visits to other bands are also frequent. But the most common form of barter is with peoples of other races, especially the Bantu.

439 [184] [222] The !O Kung of Angola, unlike all the other Bushmen, do not go out into the veld to collect vegetable foods. These are obtained by barter. The younger men hunt, and trade part of the meat and skins obtained for the cereals, maize, potatoes, manioc, etc., of the Bantu among whom they live. Honey and wax are also collected and traded, sometimes with the Bantu for food and tobacco, now and again to Europeans for powder and cartridges. Wax is a good article of trade with Portuguese traders, and the Bushmen are therefore assiduous in collecting it. Besides foodstuffs they also obtain pots and baskets from the Bantu, as well as metal wares such as knives, arrow and spear heads, and beads.[1]

The Bushmen of the Okavango swamps, again, trade ostrich egg-shell beads, ivory, ostrich feathers, skins and horns with the inter-dwelling Bantu in return for tobacco and dagga, as well as iron and such iron goods as spear heads, hoes, and knives; while the Namib Bushmen exchange similar objects with Hottentots and Europeans for blankets, knives, tobacco, and coffee.[2]

438 Among the North-Western tribes there is a whole system of trade relations between different tribes, extending from the Okavango in the north down almost to the Molopo.[3] In this the Naron and the Auen play the part of intermediaries, obtaining from the tribes further north the objects they desire, and then bartering them again further south as occasion arises. Egg-shell beads and tobacco are standard [436] articles in this trade, in the sense that they can always be bartered and may even be said to have a fixed value. From the Naron the Auen 438 procure skin garments and bags, for the making of which the former 439 are famous, giving them in return wooden pots, dishes, and spoons

[1] D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 52–3; *idem*, "Bushmen of Central Angola," 108.
[2] Passarge, "Das Okawangosumpfland," 701; *idem*, *Die Buschmänner*, 118–19; Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 166.
[3] Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, loc. cit.; Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 152–3; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 37–8.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

made by themselves, and metal pots, spear heads, knives, trade beads, etc., which they obtain through the Heikum from the OvaKwangari and MaMbukushu further north. The Naron to the east trade their skins, and formerly also ivory and ostrich feathers, with the BaTawana to the north-east for tobacco and millet. Ostrich egg-shell beads are bartered to the Bantu by all the Bushman tribes. The Koon at Naosanabis in the south, a branch of the /nu//en, are known to make them especially well, and their beads are always in great demand, passing through the Naron and the Auen to the Bantu tribes further north and east, who pay highly for them. For a chain of these beads passing round the waist the MaMbukushu, for example, give a large basket of millet, the BaTawana a large roll of tobacco, the OvaMbo an iron spear head, and so on. The Naron also trade their skins to Europeans and BeChwana for tobacco, dagga, or trade goods, and the latter, again, they pass on to the Auen.

The extensive scale on which this trade is carried out would seem to imply the existence of regulated trading communications between the different tribes. Unfortunately, there is extremely little information bearing on this point. Markets are apparently not held, the transfer of goods, as far as can be determined, being effected almost entirely through special trading visits from one group to another. Kaufmann describes the way in which such trading visits are conducted among the Auen. A small number of men and women go to the camp of the band with whom they wish to trade, laying down their weapons beforehand. Permission to enter is then given, and the barter proceeds. He adds that even if two bands are at enmity, as often happens, women will, nevertheless, go from one to the other in order to trade. This statement, however, needs to be confirmed. Passarge also suggests that the Bantu tribes of this region probably send periodical trading caravans to the different Bushman tribes, and quotes as an illustration the fact that in former times at least the OvaMbo would, with the permission of the Bushmen, go on special trading visits to obtain copper in the Otavi district of South-West Africa.

Property and Inheritance

The economic life of the band, although in effect it approaches a sort of communism, is really based on the notion of private property.[1] The only thing owned in common is the land, and even here, as we

[1] Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 155–6; Seydel, "Aus der Namib," 504; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 36, 16; Lebzelter, "Bei den !Kun-Buschleuten," 13, 16.